

**Evaluation Report for the Kentucky REA-funded  
Local Incentive Grants**

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>Part 1: Application and Awards Process</b>	<b>p. 5</b>
<b>Part 2: Student Outcomes</b>	<b>p. 8</b>
<b>Part 3: The Nature of Literacy Instruction</b>	<b>p. 24</b>
<b>Part 4: Parental/Family Involvement</b>	<b>p. 41</b>
<b>Part 5: Support for Instruction and Perceived Improvements</b>	<b>p. 43</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>p. 45</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>p. 50</b>

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to report findings from the first implementation year of the elementary school literacy initiatives supported by state-dispersed funds from the federal Reading Excellence Act grant. The evaluation was guided by the following broad questions:

- Who applied, were funded, and what type of assistance was received in the application process?
- How have students benefited in reading achievement and otherwise from the REA local incentive grants?
- How has reading instruction improved as a result of the REA local incentive grants?
- How have families been involved in the literacy development of children in the REA-funded schools?
- How have the schools and districts improved in supporting effective literacy instruction as a result of the REA local incentive grants?

In order to address these questions, a tiered research design was developed. One tier focused on all REA-funded schools, and a second tier included a subset of these schools selected for intensive study. Tier 2 schools were chosen to represent various regions of the state and a variety of reading models selected to be implemented through the REA local incentive grants. By request from the Kentucky Department of Education, these Tier 2 schools were also chosen to provide comparison by geographic region and reading model for those schools funded through another state-supported literacy initiative: the Early Reading Incentive Grants (ERIG). For comparative purposes, we examined schools' performance for those funded by ERIG for the 2001 fiscal year.

Reading Project Directors and Principals from numerous REA-funded schools throughout the state were contacted to gain cooperation as intensive study sites. Many personnel refused to respond. Others declined the invitation outright, or initially agreed and later declined. As the fall 2000 semester came to a close, the decision was made to focus only on the seven schools that we had secured for Tier 2 of the study. These schools represented five of the eight educational service regions of the state (Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Data sources from Tier 1 (all REA-funded schools) include project director surveys, teacher participant surveys, and statewide assessment scores. Tier 2 schools provide several additional data sources. After principal or project director recommendation, two teachers in each Tier 2 school agreed to participate in two to three classroom observations of literacy instruction per year, yielding classroom observational protocols. Following each observation, the teachers also participated in focused interviews. In each target teacher's

classroom the students scoring among the lowest 20% in terms of literacy achievement were also individually assessed at the beginning and end of data collection for implementation year one. The individual assessments, administered by the classroom observer, included the Yopp Singer Phonemic Segmentation Test and/or the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory, depending on the developmental level of the children assessed. Furthermore, principals in Tier 2 schools participated in beginning and end-of-year focused interviews regarding their perceptions of the reading program and its implementation within the school. Students in these Tier 2 schools were asked to complete pre- and post-reading attitude surveys: primary students completed the Early Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) while intermediate students completed the Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick). Lastly, all parents in these Tier 2 schools were asked to complete a survey regarding their involvement in their children's literacy development as well as their knowledge of the reading program being implemented in the school.

Data analysis took several forms. Statewide assessment scores were compared to statewide means and index scores. Individualized assessment scores were examined for trends. Descriptive statistics, including means and comparison to author norms, were completed for attitude surveys and scales. Parental surveys were analyzed using factor analysis, Analysis of Variance, and t-tests to note significant differences.

Transcripts from teacher and principal interviews and observational protocols were analyzed using a constant comparative method. Through organizing and sorting data, naming and coding, and continuous examination, trends, similarities, and differences were noted. Finally, frequency counts made for various questions on the project director and teacher participant surveys allowed common trends in response to be noted.

This report will be organized by the following sections:

- Part 1 – Application and awards process
- Part 2 – Student outcomes
- Part 3 – The nature of literacy instruction
- Part 4 – Parental/Family involvement in literacy
- Part 5 – Support for instruction and perceived improvements

## **Part 1: Application and Awards Process**

Information regarding the application and awards process, including who was involved, the nature of assistance received, the method of reading model selection and other data were gathered primarily through surveys sent to Project Directors and Teacher Participants.

### **Project Director Surveys**

Local Incentive Grants were awarded to 29 school districts to cover Reading Excellence Projects in 58 elementary schools. Four of these schools were supported strictly for Tutorial Assistance Grants (TAG). Fourteen different reading models were chosen as targets for implementation through these REA grants. One additional school was funded for an enhancement to Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery itself was not supported by REA local incentive grants.

Surveys were sent to those listed as project directors on the grant applications. One of the purposes of these surveys was to determine how school districts learned about the REA grants and the nature of the assistance they received in writing the grants. Only 15/29 project directors responded to the survey, but responses were received from various areas of the state. Most of the 15 respondents indicated that they heard of the grants through KDE. Many also mentioned that information regarding the grants was received from superintendents, principals, and teachers. All respondents indicated that assistance was available in preparing the grants. Many mentioned working with people from their Regional Service Centers in preparing the grants. Also mentioned were KDE workshops, KET programming, telephone conversations and e-mails with specific KDE personnel, and assistance from program-specific consultants. All respondents found the assistance to be helpful. Respondents were also asked what types of assistance were unavailable but would have been helpful in the application process. Only a few project directors responded to this question. Responses included: models available; detailed checklist of all grant application tasks in order; someone to read an abstract of the proposal and give feedback; a grant "technical assistance" hotline to give case specific advice; e-mail; model sites to visit; information on model reading programs. One respondent wrote: "a limited number of nationally validated programs were presented across the state. If the state would do the "Results" two day program that they did three or four years ago with a large number of nationally validated programs presenting it would be very helpful to school districts looking for programs that meet their needs." Finally, all respondents indicated that the choice of a reading model was made collaboratively by principals, teachers, central office personnel, site-based councils, etc.

### **Teacher Participant Surveys**

All teachers in all REA schools were also asked to complete a survey. A total of 530 surveys were returned with representation from 41 of the 58 REA-funded projects. Teachers responded from all areas of the state. It should be noted that these surveys were completed in varying degrees. In some cases, it appeared that teachers worked together to complete the survey, since responses were worded in the same way. Some respondents addressed only those items for which they could check a response. Others addressed items that required one to produce a response but skipped the items to which they could respond by selecting an answer. Due to these varying response formats, no one item was addressed on all 530 returned surveys. For most survey items, then, trends in responses will be reported.

Some of the questions on the Teacher Participant Survey were similar to those on the Project Director Survey. Many respondents indicated that they did not take part in the grant writing. Therefore, many respondents did not answer the questions about the nature of technical assistance available throughout the application process. Those who did respond to this question indicated quality assistance from Regional Service Center consultants, Kentucky Department of Education personnel, local central office personnel, and program-specific consultants.

With respect to selecting the reading model to be followed through the grant, a majority of respondents indicated that the choice was made collaboratively among administrators, teachers, school board members, site-based council members, etc. Some, however, responded that they had no voice in the model chosen. In fact, some respondents indicated that they were told what to vote for, or told they had to select a particular model or write one on their own. Those that responded more positively about the choice of the reading model offered much information regarding how a particular model was selected. Some of the methods commonly mentioned included: visiting other schools employing the model, researching, interviewing others, reviewing assessment data and selecting a model that best met the students' needs, professional development workshops by representatives from given models, model fit with school and curriculum goals, and all schools in the district had selected the model.

Some other items on the Teacher Participant Survey addressed information contributing to the context in which the local incentive grants are operating. When asked to identify the instructional approaches used in their literacy programs, the most frequently selected answers were phonics methods, literature based, basal, and whole language. Respondents seldom selected culturally responsive instruction or ESL methodologies. When asked to rank items that contributed to students' success and failure in learning to read, respondents overwhelmingly cited parental involvement/family issues as influential. Only 138 respondents found teacher effectiveness and classroom

instruction to be significant influential factors in **both** students' reading success and failure.

Interestingly, there was a disparity between how respondents thought of teacher effectiveness and classroom instruction in regard to success versus failure. Nearly one-third of those who ranked the items on the question thought that neither a lack of teacher effectiveness or poor or mediocre instruction was a significant factor in students' reading failure, yet these same respondents did think these factors were significant to students' success in learning to read. Eighty-one of the 500 who answered the question did not think teacher effectiveness or classroom instruction was a significant factor in students' success in learning to read.

## **Part 2: Student Outcomes**

Student Progress is measured in several ways through this evaluation study. First, schools' performance on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System was examined. Pertinent information included the following information for each REA-funded school: 1999-2000 baseline scores, 2000-2001 performance scores, school biennial goals, and index scores. Because we were changed with making comparisons between REA-funded and ERIG-funded schools, the same information was gathered for those schools funded for the 2001 fiscal year under the Early Reading Incentive Grants.

A second source of information regarding student outcomes included individually administered assessments for selected students in target classrooms of intensive study sites. Teachers were asked to identify the lowest 20% of their students in terms of reading ability for these assessments. Only those targeted students whose parents consented were assessed. Finally, all students in intensive study sites completed attitudinal surveys. Those in grades K - 3 were administered the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and those in grades 4 and 5 completed the Reader Self-Perception Scale.

The discussion of information in this section will occur in the order of the data sources mentioned above.

### **CATS Assessment Scores by Educational Service Region**

Region		School	99-00	00-01	Goal	Index	Model
1	REA	1	61.4	61.3	65.8	3.0	Carbo
1		2	60.3	62.9	64.9	2.9	Compass Learn. Software
1		3	72.5	82.2	74.8	1.4	Compass Learn. Software
1		4	71.4	65.3	74.4	2.7	4-Block
1		5	60.7	63.8	65	2.8	Waterford
1		6	57.3	56.2	62.3	3.4	Waterford
1	ERIG	1	63.9	66.3	68.2	2.6	Carbo
1		2	62.2	63.2	66.7	2.8	Carbo
1		3	62.9	58.8	67.1	3.2	Carbo
1		4	70.8	72.4	73.7	2.1	Carbo
1		5	69.2	71.9	72.4	2.2	Direct Instruction
1		6	59.1	67.7	63.5	2.5	4-Block
1		7	63.1	71	67.4	2.2	4-Block
Region		School	99-00	00-01	Goal	Index	Model
2	REA	1	72.3	71.9	75.2	2.2	Carbo
2		2	70.4	74.4	73.5	1.9	Carbo
2		3	65.2	74.3	68.7	2.0	ELLI
2		4	60.7	58.4	64.9	3.2	ELLI



2	ERIG	1	69.2	74.2	72.7	2.0	Breakthrough to Literacy
2		2	70.3	77.4	73.7	1.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
2		3	65.4	75.8	68.9	1.9	Direct Instruction
2		4	70.7	80.4	73.5	1.6	Direct Instruction
2		5	74.6	80.3	76.9	1.5	Direct Instruction
2		6	75.1	76	77.3	1.8	Direct Instruction
2		7	78.8	77.7	80.4	1.7	Direct Instruction
2		8	77.4	80.2	79.6	1.5	DWOK
2		9	55.2	57.4	59.9	3.3	Success for All
2		10	63.8	66.8	68.2	2.6	Success for All
2		11	59.8	57.2	64.6	3.3	Project READ
2		12	59.7	65.2	64.5	2.7	Project READ
2		13	64	66.4	68.1	2.6	Reading Recovery
3	REA	1	42.6	50.5	49.6	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		2	43.5	46.1	50.5	4.1	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		3	56.5	55.9	61.7	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		4	51.7	55.8	57.5	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		5	50.8	51.3	56.8	3.7	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		6	54	61.5	59.5	3	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3		7	47.1	53.4	53.7	3.6	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	ERIG	1	67.2	64.6	71	2.7	Reading Recovery
3		2	50.4	59.4	56.5	3.1	Reading Recovery
3		3	47	48.7	53.4	3.9	Reading Recovery
4	REA	1	60.6	61.9	65.2	2.9	Breakthrough to Literacy
4		2	64.1	66.1	68.3	2.6	America's Choice
4		3	50.3	55.2	55.9	3.4	America's Choice
4	ERIG	1	46.9	55.2	53.4	3.4	Breakthrough to Literacy
4		2	69.7	73.2	73.1	2.1	DWOK
4		3	74.4	75.7	76.8	1.9	DWOK
4		4	54.8	50.8	60.2	3.8	4-Block
4		5	72.9	78.3	75.9	1.7	Local
4		6	81.7	79	83.4	1.6	Local

Region		School	99-00	00-01	Goal	Index	Model
5	REA	1	62.4	58.9	66.5	3.2	Literacy First
5		2	54.7	55.9	59.9	3.4	Literacy First
5		3	47.7	51.8	53.7	3.7	Literacy First
5		4	60	62.8	64.3	2.9	Literacy First
5		5	67.6	70.5	71.3	2.3	4-Block

5		6	66.2	64.5	70	2.7	4-Block
5	ERIG	1	67.7	67.7	71.3	2.5	Direct Instruction
5		2	73.6	82.2	75.9	1.4	Early Succ./Soar to Succ.
5		3	71	70.3	73.6	2.3	Early Succ./Soar to Succ.
5		4	83.3	88.9	84.8	0.9	Reading Recovery
5		5	74	74.7	76.5	1.9	Reading Recovery
5		6	80.5	85.4	82.5	1.1	Success for All
5		7	75.3	78	77.9	1.7	Reading Recovery
6	REA	1	54.3	59.7	59.9	3.1	Carbo
6		2	73.2	75.4	76	1.9	ELLI
6		3	52.3	59.7	---	3.1	4-Block/Compact for Rdg.
6		4	59.6	68.2	64.6	2.4	4-Block
6		5	51.3	58.7	56.8	3.2	Success for All
6		6	59.4	66.8	63.4	2.6	Success for All
6		7	51.3	50.4	57.4	3.8	Success for All
6		8	53.7	55.5	59.4	3.4	Success for All
6		9	72.4	75.7	75.5	1.9	Together we can/Wiggles
6	ERIG	1	69.4	72	73	2.2	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		2	59.9	75	64.3	1.9	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		3	56.8	60.1	61.9	3.1	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		4	55.7	65	61	2.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		5	61.3	70.2	65.5	2.3	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		6	58.1	64.6	62.9	2.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
6		7	54.3	59.2	58.9	3.1	Carbo
6		8	67	73.7	70.7	2.0	Dev. Young Readers
6		9	69.4	80	72.4	1.5	Reading Recovery
6		10	55.7	54.6	61.1	3.5	Reading Recovery
6		11	District Averages				Success for All
6		12	District Averages				Success for All
6		13	58	55.8	63.1	3.4	Success for All
7	REA	1	61.1	64.7	65.3	2.7	CA Early Literacy Learning
7		2	54	57.5	59.3	3.3	CA Early Literacy Learning
7		3	54.8	52.1	59.6	3.7	CA Early Literacy Learning
7		4	62.1	69.9	66.4	2.3	America's Choice
<b>Region</b>		<b>School</b>	<b>99-00</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>Model</b>
7		5	67.8	66.4	70.9	2.4	America's Choice
7		6	59.4	69.5	63.8	2.3	Project READ
7		7	61.8	65.8	66	2.6	RR/4-Block/Lightspan
7		8	70.9	75.9	72.7	1.9	RR/4-Block/Lightspan
7	ERIG	1	--	--	--	--	Breakthrough to Literacy

7		2	65.2	74.5	69	2.0	Breakthrough to Literacy
7		3	64.5	74.5	68.2	2.0	4-Block
7		4	52.7	59.2	57.7	3.1	Project READ
7		5	56.4	72.4	61.6	2.1	Project READ
7		6	72.1	82.4	74.2	1.4	Project READ
7		7	57.3	57.1	62	3.3	Project READ
7		8	62.6	69.4	66.4	2.4	Project READ
7		9	69.5	71.2	72.8	2.2	Reading Recovery
7		10	67.6	72.8	70.9	2.1	Reading Recovery
7		11	67	70	70.9	2.3	Roots & Wings
7		12	54	50.7	58.8	3.0	America's Choice
7		13	50	66	55.7	2.6	America's Choice

8	REA	1	56.5	53.5	61.4	3.6	RR Plus
8		2	60.6	68.8	65.2	2.4	Success for All
8		3	60.2	72.4	64.8	2.1	America's Choice
8		4	68.3	73.9	71.4	2.0	America's Choice
8		5	51.9	76.8	56.9	1.8	Fast For Word
8		6	63.8	73.7	67.2	2.0	Fast For Word
8		7	49.1	54.2	55.1	3.5	Project READ
8		8	55.4	64.8	60.3	2.7	Project READ
8		9	63.1	68.8	67.1	2.4	Success for All
8		10	58.5	59.1	63.1	3.1	Success for All
8		11	54.9	56.3	60	3.4	TAG
8		12	59.7	73.6	64.2	2.0	TAG
8		13	53.8	61.8	59.3	2.9	TAG
8		14	52.9	66.2	58.2	2.6	TAG

8	ERIG	1	56.9	61.6	61.9	3.0	Breakthrough to Literacy
8		2	52.3	53.5	57.7	3.6	Project READ
8		3	54.8	56.7	60.3	3.3	Project READ
8		4	64.6	69.9	68.1	2.3	Project READ
8		5	51.9	58.3	57.3	3.2	Reading Recovery
8		6	61.1	67.2	65.7	2.5	Reading Recovery
8		7	58	62.3	63.1	2.9	Success for All

Region	School	99-00	00-01	Goal	Index	Model
8	8	71.4	70.4	74.2	2.3	Success for All
8	9	54.6	55.7	60.2	3.4	Project READ
8	10	53.1	56.4	59.1	3.4	Reading Recovery

Several interesting observations can be made when examining these data. First, it should be noted that among the REA funded schools, 46 improved their scores from the baseline 1999-2000 scores to the 2000-2001 testing cycle.

Twenty-two of these schools exceeded their biennial goal in the first half of the biennium, and eleven schools scored above the state average of 70.9 for the 2000-2001 school year. The state has set a goal that all schools average a CATS score of at least 100/140 by the year 2014.

As mentioned in the introduction, KDE requested that comparisons be made between REA-funded and ERIG-funded (state-supported) schools. There are complete assessment data available for 69 of the 72 schools funded by ERIG in the 2001 fiscal year. Of these 69, 56 schools improved their average scores from the baseline to the 2000-2001 testing cycle. Thirty-five ERIG-funded schools exceeded their biennial goal in the first half of the biennial cycle, and 30 schools scored above the state average for the 2000-2001 school year. Based on these data alone, it appears that many REA and ERIG funded schools are improving in terms of students' literacy achievement. The following table presents average REA and ERIG scores by educational service region.

#### **Average Assessment Scores by Region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>99-00</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Index</b>
1	REA	65.6	65.3	67.9	2.7
1	ERIG	64.5	67.3	68.4	2.5
2	REA	67.2	69.8	70.6	2.3
2	ERIG	68.0	71.9	71.4	2.1
3	REA	49.5	53.5	55.6	3.5
3	ERIG	54.9	57.6	60.3	3.2
4	REA	58.3	61.1	63.1	3.0
4	ERIG	66.7	68.7	70.5	2.4
5	REA	59.8	60.7	64.3	3.0
5	ERIG	75.1	78.2	77.5	1.7
6	REA	58.6	63.3	64.1	2.8
6	ERIG	60.5	66.4	65.0	2.6
7	REA	61.5	65.2	65.5	2.7
7	ERIG	61.6	68.3	65.7	2.4
8	REA	57.8	66.0	62.4	2.6
8	ERIG	57.9	61.2	62.8	3.0

Taken strictly at face value, it might appear that ERIG schools are out-performing REA schools. The differences in index scores indicate that REA schools must make up more ground in all but region 8 in order to meet the state goal for proficiency by 2014. The difference between REA and ERIG schools is particularly striking for region 5, where REA schools must increase an average of 3 points per year while ERIG schools must increase an average of 1.7 points per year. Another lens for viewing these data, however, focuses on the starting point. On average, baseline scores for ERIG-supported schools were 3.86 points higher than REA-supported schools. This advantage increased to 4.3 points for the 2000-2001 testing cycle. It should be underscored that only "schools in

need” could apply for REA support; this was not a necessary criterion for ERIG grants. In all but region 1, average ERIG-funded school scores exceeded REA-funded school scores at the baseline, although averages are quite close in regions 7 and 8. Again, the difference for schools in region 5 is most striking, but the trend is present throughout the data. Examining data by region indicates that both ERIG and REA schools in region 3 are, on the average, earning the lowest scores from schools in this data set. One must interpret these data cautiously, however. Region 3 includes the largest urban area in the state. The majority of these schools serve a very high percentage of children from low SES homes with relatively lower literacy rates among parents of students.

As previously mentioned, the Kentucky Department of Education also requested that student performance in REA-funded and ERIG-funded schools be compared with reference to the literacy model supported by each grant. The following chart indicates schools' average scores clustered by literacy model selected. Only those models chosen for **both** REA- and ERIG-supported projects are listed in the chart.

#### CATS Assessment Scores by Literacy Model

Region		Sch.	99-00	00-01	Goal	In- dex	Model
4	REA	1	64.1	66.1	68.3	2.6	America's Choice
4	REA	2	50.3	55.2	55.9	3.4	America's Choice
7	REA	3	62.1	69.9	66.4	2.3	America's Choice
7	REA	4	67.8	66.4	70.9	2.4	America's Choice
7	ERIG	5	54	50.7	58.8	3.0	America's Choice
7	ERIG	6	50	66	55.7	2.6	America's Choice

8	REA	7	60.2	72.4	64.8	2.1	America's Choice
8	REA	8	68.3	73.9	71.4	2.0	America's Choice
2	ERIG	1	69.2	74.2	72.7	2.0	Breakthrough to Literacy
2	ERIG	2	70.3	77.4	73.7	1.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
4	REA	3	60.6	61.9	65.2	2.9	Breakthrough to Literacy
4	ERIG	4	46.9	55.2	53.4	3.4	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	5	69.4	72	73	2.2	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	6	59.9	75	64.3	1.9	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	7	56.8	60.1	61.9	3.1	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	8	55.7	65	61	2.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	9	61.3	70.2	65.5	2.3	Breakthrough to Literacy
6	ERIG	10	58.1	64.6	62.9	2.7	Breakthrough to Literacy
7	ERIG	11	--	--	--	--	Breakthrough to Literacy
7	ERIG	12	65.2	74.5	69	2.0	Breakthrough to Literacy
8	ERIG	13	56.9	61.6	61.9	3	Breakthrough to Literacy

1	ERIG	1	63.9	66.3	68.2	2.6	Carbo
1	ERIG	2	63.2	63.2	66.7	2.8	Carbo
1	ERIG	3	62.9	58.8	67.1	3.2	Carbo
1	ERIG	4	70.8	72.4	73.7	2.1	Carbo
1	REA	5	61.4	61.3	65.8	3.0	Carbo
2	REA	6	72.3	71.9	75.2	2.2	Carbo
2	REA	7	70.4	74.4	73.5	1.9	Carbo
6	REA	8	54.3	59.7	59.9	3.1	Carbo
6	ERIG	9	54.3	59.2	58.9	3.1	Carbo

1	ERIG	1	59.1	67.7	63.5	2.5	4-Block
1	ERIG	2	63.1	71	67.4	2.2	4-Block
1	REA	3	71.4	65.3	74.4	2.7	4-Block
3	REA	4	42.6	50.5	49.6	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	REA	5	43.5	46.1	50.5	4.1	4-Block/Ch. Dev.

In-Region		Sch.	99-00	00-01	Goal	dex	Model
3	REA	6	56.5	55.9	61.7	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	REA	7	51.7	55.8	57.5	3.4	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	REA	8	50.8	51.3	56.8	3.7	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	REA	9	54	61.5	59.5	3	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
3	REA	10	47.1	53.4	53.7	3.6	4-Block/Ch. Dev.
4	ERIG	11	54.8	50.8	60.2	3.8	4-Block
5	REA	12	67.6	70.5	71.3	2.3	4-Block
5	REA	13	66.2	64.5	70	2.7	4-Block
6	REA	14	52.3	59.7	---	3.1	4-Block/Compact for Rdg.
6	REA	15	59.6	68.2	64.6	2.4	4-Block

7	ERIG	16	64.5	74.5	68.2	2.0	4-Block
7	REA	17	61.8	65.8	66	2.6	RR/4-Block/Lightspan
7	REA	18	70.9	75.9	72.7	1.9	RR/4-Block/Lightspan
2	ERIG	1	59.8	57.2	64.6	3.3	Project READ
2	ERIG	2	59.7	65.2	64.5	2.7	Project READ
7	REA	3	59.4	69.5	63.8	2.3	Project READ
7	ERIG	4	52.7	59.2	57.7	3.1	Project READ
7	ERIG	5	56.4	72.4	61.6	2.1	Project READ
7	ERIG	6	72.1	82.4	74.2	1.4	Project READ
7	ERIG	7	57.3	57.1	62	3.3	Project READ
7	ERIG	8	62.6	69.4	66.4	2.4	Project READ
8	ERIG	9	49.1	54.2	55.1	3.5	Project READ
8	REA	10	55.4	64.8	60.3	2.7	Project READ
8	ERIG	11	52.3	53.5	57.7	3.6	Project READ
8	ERIG	12	54.8	56.7	60.3	3.3	Project READ
8	ERIG	13	64.6	69.9	68.1	2.3	Project READ
2	ERIG	1	64	66.4	68.1	2.6	Reading Recovery
3	ERIG	2	67.2	64.6	71	2.7	Reading Recovery
3	ERIG	3	50.4	59.4	56.5	3.1	Reading Recovery
3	ERIG	4	47	48.7	53.4	3.9	Reading Recovery
5	ERIG	5	83.3	88.9	84.8	0.9	Reading Recovery
5	ERIG	6	74	74.7	76.5	1.9	Reading Recovery
5	ERIG	7	75.3	78	77.9	1.7	Reading Recovery
6	ERIG	8	69.4	80	72.4	1.5	Reading Recovery
6	ERIG	9	55.7	54.6	61.1	3.5	Reading Recovery
7	ERIG	10	69.5	71.2	72.8	2.2	Reading Recovery
7	ERIG	11	67.6	72.8	70.9	2.1	Reading Recovery
8	REA	12	56.5	53.5	61.4	3.6	Reading Recovery Plus
8	ERIG	13	51.9	58.3	57.3	3.2	Reading Recovery
8	ERIG	14	61.1	67.2	65.7	2.5	Reading Recovery

In-

Region		Sch.	99-00	00-01	Goal	dex	Model
8	ERIG	15	53.1	56.4	59.1	3.4	Reading Recovery
2	ERIG	1	55.2	57.4	59.9	3.3	Success for All
5	ERIG	2	80.5	85.4	82.5	1.1	Success for All
6	REA	3	51.3	58.7	56.8	3.2	Success for All
6	REA	4	59.4	66.8	63.4	2.6	Success for All
6	REA	5	51.3	50.4	57.4	3.8	Success for All
6	REA	6	53.7	55.5	59.4	3.4	Success for All
6	ERIG	7	District Averages				Success for All
6	ERIG	8	District Averages				Success for All

6	ERIG	9	58	55.8	63.1	3.4	Success for All
8	REA	10	60.6	68.8	65.2	2.4	Success for All
8	REA	11	63.1	68.8	67.1	2.4	Success for All
8	REA	12	58.5	59.1	63.1	3.1	Success for All
8	ERIG	13	58	62.3	63.1	2.9	Success for All
8	ERIG	14	71.4	70.4	74.2	2.3	Success for All

Rather than looking at average scoring for model, it would be helpful to examine the average difference in scores from baseline to the 2000-2001 testing by model. This method of analysis would control for generally high scoring schools clustering within given models. The following table presents these average gain scores for each of the seven funded models. ERIG and REA supported schools were combined in this analysis.



### Average Gain Scores by Model and Funding Source

Model	Source	Average Gain
America's Choice	REA	5.2
America's Choice	ERIG	6.4
Breakthrough to Literacy	REA	1.2
Breakthrough to Literacy	ERIG	1
Carbo Reading Styles	REA	2.2
Carbo Reading Styles	ERIG	1.2
Four Block	REA	3.5
Four Block	ERIG	5.6
Project READ	REA	9.8
Project READ	ERIG	5.1
Reading Recovery	REA	-3
Reading Recovery	ERIG	3.8
Success For All	REA	4.3
Success For All	ERIG	1.6

An examination of these average gain scores from the 1999-2000 baseline to the 2000-2001 testing cycle indicates that REA-funded schools made greater gains than ERIG-funded schools under four of the seven common models.

Analyzing school scores by literacy model selected reveals some interesting patterns. It is clear that students, on the average, made progress from baseline to 2000-2001 testing under all models. It is also clear, however, that progress varied both within and across models. Following is a brief description of each model, and a summary of student progress under the model.

- America's Choice is a comprehensive reform model. The aspect of the model devoted to literacy includes a two and one-half hour block with focus on phonemic awareness, fluency, and reading habits. This model was selected by two ERIG-funded and six REA-funded schools. Under this model, six of the eight schools increased their scores, four schools exceeded their biennial goals in the first half of the biennium, and two schools scored at or above the state average for the 2000-2001 testing cycle.
- Breakthrough to Literacy, a comprehensive model aimed at early literacy, was chosen by 11 ERIG-funded and one REA-funded school. Under this model, all schools increased their scores, eight schools exceeded their biennial goals in the first half of the biennium, and five schools scored above the state average for the 2000-2001 testing.

- Carbo Reading Styles is a supplemental program that focuses on adapting instruction and activities to address students' preferred learning styles. Four REA-funded schools and 5 ERIG-funded schools chose this model. Six of the schools using this program increased their scores from the baseline to the 2000-2001 testing. Furthermore, two of the schools exceeded their biennial goals in the first half of the biennium cycle, and three schools scored above the state average in the 2000-2001 testing. As the above table indicates, REA-funded schools appeared to make greater assessment gains than ERIG-funded schools under this model.
- Four Blocks is a comprehensive model that provides daily instruction in Guided Reading, Self-selected Reading, Writing, and Word Study. The Four Block model (including adaptations) was adopted by 18 schools (4 ERIG, 14 REA), 14 of which increased scores from the baseline to the 2000-2001 testing. Four of these schools exceeded their biennial goals in the first half of the biennium, and three scored above the state average for the 2000-2001 testing. Under the Four Block model, ERIG schools made greater assessment gains than did REA schools. It should also be noted that baseline scores for REA -funded schools under this model were significantly lower than those for ERIG-funded schools.
- Project READ is a K-6 program that focuses on direct, systematic phonics instruction in grades K-3, then adds components in comprehension and writing in grades 4-6. Thirteen schools, eleven of which increased their scores from the baseline to the 2000-2001 testing, adopted this model. Additionally, eight schools exceeded their biennial goal in the first half of the biennium, and two schools scored above the state average for the state average for the 2000-2001 testing. Average baseline scores for REA- and ERIG-funded schools under this model were very similar. At the 2000-2001 testing, however, REA-funded schools following this model made stronger gains than ERIG-funded schools (9.8 points versus 5.1 points).
- Reading Recovery is a supplemental program for early intervention of first grade students with low literacy skills. Reading Recovery was the funded model in 15 schools, 14 of them supported by ERIG. Twelve of the schools increased their scores from the baseline to the 2001 testing, seven exceeded their biennial goals in the first half of the biennium, and five scored above the state average. As the above table indicates, this was the only model under which an average gain score for REA schools fell in the negative category. It must be remembered, however, that there was only one REA-funded school following this model. That school must gain an average of 3.6 points per year to meet the state goal by 2014.
- Success for All is an intensive school-wide program in which students are assessed and re-grouped often in order to maximize instruction. The program includes intensive tutoring for the youngest students. Of the 14

schools adopting this model, two reported only district average scores due to attrition and moving within the district. Of the remaining 12 schools, nine increased their scores from baseline to the 2001 testing, five exceeded their scoring goals in the first half of the biennium, and one school scored above the state average for the 2001 testing. This model was adopted by seven REA-funded schools and five ERIG-funded schools. While average baseline and 2001 assessment scores for REA-funded were lower than those for ERIG-funded schools, REA-funded schools made greater gains than ERIG-funded schools under this model.

### **Individualized Student Assessments**

As stated in the introduction, low-achieving students in intensive study site classrooms were individually assessed by the classroom observer. Teachers in these classrooms were asked to identify the lowest 20% of the students in terms of reading ability. Students who fell in this category and whose parents gave permission were administered the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory. The table below indicates that pre-and post-assessment data are not available on all students.

### Individualized Assessment Data for Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory

School	St./Gr.	Pre-Collection			Post-Collection		
		Indep.	Inst.	Frust.	Indep.	Inst.	Frust.
1	1/3	---	---	---	Primer	Primer	L1
1	2/3	---	---	---	Primer	L1	L2
1	3/5	---	---	---	L1	L1	L2
1	4/5	---	---	---	L1	L1	L2
2	1/2	Primer	---	L1	P Prim.	Primer	L1
2	2/2	L2	L3	L4	L!	L2	L4
2	3/2	P Prim.	Primer	L1	---	Primer	L1
2	4/2	P Prim.	Primer	L1	Primer	Primer	L1
2	5/2	--	P Prim.	Primer	P Prim.	Primer	L1
3	1/2	P Prim.	Primer	L1	Primer	L1	L2
3	2/2	P Prim.	Primer	L1	P Prim.	Primer	L1
3	3/2	P Prim.	Primer	L1	P Prim.	Primer	L1
3	4/4	L3	L4	L5	L4	L5	L6
3	5/4	L1	L2	L3	L2	L3	L4
3	6/4	L3	L4	L5	L3	L4	L5
3	7/4	L2	L3	L4	L2	L3	L4
4	1/1	---	P Prim.	Primer	P Prim.	Primer	L1
4	2/1	Primer	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
4	3/1	P Prim.	Primer	L1	L2	L2	---
4	4/1	---	P Prim.	Primer	---	P Prim.	Primer
4	5/1	---	P Prim.	Primer	---	P Prim.	Primer
5	1/2	---	---	---	---	Primer	L1
5	2/2	---	---	---	---	Primer	L1
5	3/3	---	---	---	---	Primer	L1
5	4/1	---	---	---	---	---	Primer
5	5/2	---	---	---	---	---	Primer
6	1/1	---	P Prim.	Primer	P Prim.	Primer	L1
6	2/1	---	P Prim.	P Prim.	P Prim.	P Prim.	Primer
6	3/1	Primer	Primer	L1	L1	L2	L3
6	4/1	---	Primer	L1	L1	L1	L2
6	5/3	L3	L4	L5	Primer	L2	L3
7	1/1	Primer	---	L1	Primer	---	L1
7	2/1	---	P Prim.	Primer	Primer	---	L1
7	3/1	P Prim.	Primer	L1	Primer	L1	L2
7	4/4	L4	L5	L6	L6	L7	L8
7	5/4	L3	L4	L5	---	L5-6	L7
7	7/4	---	---	L3	L4	L5	L5

There were 37 students who were administered the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory; 28 of these students were tested at the beginning and ending of the data-gathering process for the first implementation year. Of these 28 students, 17 (61%) increased their scores from pre-testing to post-testing. Furthermore, according to this assessment it appears that roughly half (51%) of the students tested were reading on or above grade level by the end of the 2000-2001 school year.

### **Student Attitudes/Self-Perceptions**

Research has shown students' attitudes about reading and their perceptions of self as a reader impact their reading achievement. As mentioned previously, two different measures were used in order to assess these student outcomes. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was completed by students in levels K-3 at intensive study sites, while the Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995) was completed by 4th and 5th level students in intensive study sites.

### Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results Percentile Scores

School	Grade	Pre-Collection			Post-Collection		
		# Ss	Rec.	Aca.	#Ss	Rec.	Aca.
1	1				38	49.52	50.78
1	2				71	50.78	54.6
1	3				32	45.34	48.31
2	1				69	51.1	61.4
2	2				57	57.0	75.4
2	3				28	60.0	66.2
3	K	90	63.3	68.02	57	77.0	63.3
3	1	86	53.8	59.4	54	61.74	61.46
3	2	83	49.05	57.98	67	46.81	57.67
3	3	72	49.05	57.98	90	40.04	54.88
4	K				16	77.5	79.0
4	1	60	46.43	51.61	93	52.0	63.3
4	2	63	59.11	62.82	65	56.9	57.33
4	3				79	55.97	53.82
5	1	74	55.22	52.9			
5	2	92	49.25	58.35			
5	3	53	67.2	68.69			
6	1	65	60.38	60.70	50	64.8	69.38
6	2	40	56.75	72.42	64	55.73	67.37
6	3	64	46.81	57.87	71	43.67	53.95
7	K				71	71.1	58.0
7	1	17	60.88	62.7	65	52.63	53.1
7	2				93	50.2	57.4
7	3				56	38.3	45.6

Several interesting observations may be made from viewing the average percentile scores for the intensive study sites' ERAS scores. First, as the above table indicates, some of the schools did not ask students to complete the survey at both the beginning and end of the school year. Of those who did administer the survey twice, different numbers of children at given grade levels completed the survey at the two administrations. Second, the magnitude of the percentile scores is a concern. Even for the youngest children, percentile scores indicate that these children held significantly less positive attitudes about reading than did their age-level peers who were part of the norming population. Average Full Scale scores for students in this sample are the following: Kindergarten - 63.03, First - 58.01, Second - 58.16, and Third - 52.61. Third, for those students on whom pre- and post-data are available, scores fell for five groups in the recreational reading category and four groups in the academic reading category. Fourth, there were differential responses for academic and recreational reading

scales, in most instances favoring the academic. At the pre-collection phase, average academic percentile scores were higher than average recreational reading scores in all but one instance. At the post-collection phase, average percentile academic reading scores were higher than average recreational reading scores in 17 of 21 instances. It may be that an increased emphasis needs to be placed on the joy of reading and reading for pleasure in these classrooms. Finally, in many schools, younger students held more positive attitudes about reading, both academic and recreational, than did older students. This trend was noted by the authors of the survey as well, and adjustments were made in the conversion scales to account for this change.

Only five of the seven intensive study sites asked students to complete the Reader Self-Perception Scale, and the scale was completed only at the end of the year in these schools. A total of 546 students completed the scale.

#### **Reader Self-Perception Scale: Average School Scores**

<b>School</b>	<b>General Perception</b>	<b>Observational Comparison</b>	<b>Social Feedback</b>	<b>Physiological States</b>
<b>Score Guide:</b>				
<b>High</b>	<b>44+</b>	<b>26+</b>	<b>38+</b>	<b>37+</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Low</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>1</b> (87 Ss)	39.08	19.72	34.72	29.98
<b>2</b> (103 Ss)	37.68	20.72	34.92	31.96
<b>3</b> (115 Ss)	38.96	20.52	34.26	30.04
<b>4</b> (65 Ss)	39.81	21.05	36.37	32.37
<b>5</b> (176 Ss)	39.98	21.64	36.15	36.15

An examination of these data indicates that, on the average, students did not score in the "high" category on any scale. The majority of the scores cluster around the "average" category for all schools on all scales. In all instances, there were some students who indicated the highest scores. The lowest scores for students in all schools were made on the Observational Comparison category. Survey items in this category require students to compare their reading abilities, attitudes, and perceptions to those of their classmates.

### **Part 3: The Nature of Literacy Instruction**

Because so many different literacy models were implemented in many different contexts, the nature of literacy instruction taking place supported by the Reading Excellence Act varies greatly. Teachers completing the Participant Survey indicated that the literacy models they employed were tied closely to the school's consolidated plan, the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment, and the Program of Studies for Reading/Language Arts. Many described their literacy programs as being literature based. They also noted that within these programs basals might be used, and phonics received a good deal of attention. Several respondents noted that their literacy programs incorporated interactive writing, use of computer programming, and methodologies related to direct instruction.

In order to illustrate the variety of instruction taking place in REA-funded schools, we have included three case studies based on the first implementation year of REA projects. We chose these three studies to demonstrate diversity of programs and contexts. Pseudonyms are used to protect identities.

#### **Case Study – Madison School**



## Introduction

Madison Elementary is a K-8 school located on the fringes of the Ohio River. A major metropolitan city can be clearly viewed just across the river from this small blue-collar community. The 800 students that attend Madison are predominately white (99%) and live in walking distance of the school. The High school and board of Education are located within 500 feet. The schools are surrounded by row houses tightly packed together; a cluster of government subsidized housing and some small retail shops and businesses. Although the school has a sizable, well-stocked and technologically innovative library, there is no Public Library in the city. The schools and the majority of the houses around them were erected in the 1950's. Although the school building appears old and in need of some remodeling, it is clean and student-work is attractively displayed along the hallways.

The free/reduced lunch population is nearly 75%. The principal predicts that some of the remaining 25% either qualify for free/reduced lunch or nearly qualify based on conversations and experiences she has had with school families. The Family Resource Center at the school is equipped with a full-time nurse and Coordinator. Many counseling and informative services are offered through this center. They consistently offer materials and services to the community.

## Student Outcomes

Results from statewide testing allowed Madison Elementary to apply for REA funding. In Kentucky, the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System is utilized to measure all schools progress in educating children. The CTBS, a national standardized test is also given to measure basic skills in reading, writing and math. The tests are graded and averaged with non-academic data such as dropout, attendance and retention rates. Schools are judged on two years of test scores. The state has set a goal of all schools reaching 100/140 by the year 2014. Each school is given a growth chart indicating the progress it must make in order to reach that goal.

In order to reach the goal for the year 2014, Madison Elementary must increase its combined scores by 2.9 points each year. Madison had a score of 60.6 on the 1999-2000 combined cycle. Although the scores improved in 2001 to 61.9, they did not improve enough to reach their goal. They only improved 1.3 points. In order to meet their goal for the 2001-2002 cycle and stay on target for meeting the overall goal of 100 by 2014, they must improve 3.3 points to 65.2.

In applying for the Reading Excellence Grant, Madison indicated a great need of support in order to boost student outcomes in reading. According to the 1998-99 Kentucky Core Content Test, fourth grade students at the school score

below the state average in all areas of reading. Reading inventories administered in January of 2000 indicated that 53% of first grade students are reading at the pre-primer level. This administration of reading inventories also indicated that 60% of second graders are reading below grade level. Teachers reported that 70% of the 99 students enrolled in the ESS programs during the 1998-99 school year were primary students. The equivalent of one entire classroom of primary students has been retained each year for the past three years primarily due to poor reading skills.

Five students from the two target classrooms were assessed using the Yopp-Singer test of Phoneme Segmentation and the Flynt-Cooter Informal Reading Inventory in January of 2000 and again in May of 2000. Incidentally, eight students performed the assessments in January and only six of the eight were still enrolled in the school on May to participate in the second collection. Another student was absent on the day the field observer came to collect data. This student had been referred for truancy as he had missed 65 days of school. The principal and target teachers expressed a high incidence of transience and truancy at Madison. The principal shared an experience of going to one child's home almost daily to escort the child to school.

Four of the first grade students scored perfectly on the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation, indicating an understanding of breaking words into individual letter sounds. The fifth student only missed two of the 22-items. On the Flynt-Cooter, the results are shown in the table below:

### **Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory Results**

#### **Pre-Collection**

#### **Post-Collection**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Indep.</b>	<b>Inst.</b>	<b>Frust</b>	<b>Indep.</b>	<b>Inst.</b>	<b>Frust.</b>
1	Primer	---	Level 1	P Primer	Primer	Level 1
2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 1	Level 2	Level 4
3	P Primer	Primer	Level 1	-----	Primer	Level 1
4	P Primer	Primer	Level 1	Primer	Primer	Level 1
5	-----	P Primer	Primer	P Primer	Primer	Level 1

The data collected from the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory indicates that four of the five children evaluated were not reading on grade level at the end of the school year. In fact reading progress as measured by this assessment indicated very little reading growth over the two collections.

A measure of Reading Attitude at Madison Elementary consistently indicates higher percentiles for Academic versus Recreational settings for reading. (See table below) Percentiles for recreational versus academic scales varied 5-11 percentiles. The percentiles for overall opinions of reading were between 41-64. Generally, the scores decreased with age from 1-3 grade. Interestingly, the greatest percentile difference scores from pre and post

collections indicated a better attitude about reading in the beginning of the year than at the end of the year for the kindergarten students. Their overall attitude decreased significantly from 64.76 to 52. Information gathered from the principal indicated that the majority of the kindergarten students enter the school unable to identify letters. Moreover, they exhibit little knowledge of print materials.

### **The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results 2000-2001 Madison Elementary Percentiles**

<u><b>Pre-Collection</b></u>				<u><b>Post-Collection</b></u>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>#Ss</b>	<b>Rec.</b>	<b>Aca.</b>	<b>#Ss</b>	<b>Rec.</b>	<b>Aca.</b>
<b>K</b>	90	63.6	68.02	57	77	63.3
<b>1</b>	86	53.8	59.4	54	61.74	61.46
<b>2</b>	83	49.05	57.98	67	46.81	57.67
<b>3</b>	72	49.05	57.98	90	40.4	54.88

\*Rec= Recreational Aca=Academic

The average pre/post full scale percentiles for Madison Elementary were: Kindergarten - 64.76/52, First - 56.02/60.35, Second - 57/51/47, Third - 53.51/41.8.

Although the intermediate students at Madison are not participating in the Reading Excellence funded reading model, over a 100 students did complete the Reader Self Perception Scale (RSPS). This scale is based on Bandura's (1977, 1982) theory of perceived self-efficacy. Stemming from this theory, the 28-items address four basic factors that readers take into account when estimating themselves as a reader. These are, Performance (General Perception), Observational Comparison, Social Feedback and Physiological States. The reader thus receives four separate scores in completing the scale. At Madison, the students indicated a low –average to average opinion of themselves as readers in all four of the areas surveyed.

#### **Nature of Instruction**

The Reading Excellence Funds in the school are being used to support a research based reading model called Breakthrough to Literacy. This program was designed at the University of Iowa and was designed for students pre-K through first grade. The purpose of the program is to establish the foundations of reading in a dynamic balanced oral and print environment. The program is supported by interactive software, print materials for home and school and continued on-site professional development.

At Madison Elementary, the program is used in all K-2 classrooms and one third grade classroom of children identified as "low" readers. The school faculty decided that the Breakthrough to Literacy materials would be appropriate for children at higher-grade levels than it was originally intended. The faculty at the school especially liked the model because of the continued support they receive through intense additional training sessions and the incorporation of technology that is engaging to students. Two target teachers indicated an appreciation for the focus on skill development that the program offers. One of the target teachers, Ms. Cross, clearly stated that the Breakthrough to Literacy Program is only part of her overall reading program. She supplements the program with books, stories and related activities from a Basal Series. Although the other target teacher, Ms. Snow, also indicated the need to use other materials to support her overall reading program, she indicated that she relied more heavily on the program to teach reading.

Classroom observations indicate a strong focus on reading skills. An emphasis on utilizing phonics as a strategy to decode was prevalent. The two-hour Literacy block is generally consists of a whole class instruction introducing the activities of the day followed by small group guided reading instruction with the teacher and individual seat work on worksheets designed to practice skills and/or strategies. The small groups are usually arranged according to ability. The instruction and questioning in the reading groups is teacher directed and is dominated by oral and choral reading. Although learning phonetic rules is the dominant purpose, comprehension measures are also included. The pace of the activities seems to be appropriate but the overall organization of the literacy instruction is not focused on the child. The engagement of the children in the activities seems to be marginal at best.

### Parental Involvement

Parents at the school completed a 15-item survey regarding home literacy practices. This survey was completed pre and post. At Madison, the parents reported no significant difference over the two collections on any of the items. Moreover, the overall responses were positive.

### Congruence with International Standards

Although overwhelming standardized and informal measures indicated that many of the primary level students at Madison Elementary are struggling with reading, teachers are making efforts to address the International Reading Association Standards. Teachers are making efforts to intervene with students who appear in need as soon as the need becomes apparent. The entire REA grant application was written for student support in grades K-2. A variety of reading materials are included and utilized in the school. Teachers consistently read aloud to children and provide opportunities for students to read independently. In fact, the principal challenges the students to meet a

recreational reading goal each quarter. When the goal is reached the whole school is treated. The teachers at Madison organize their classrooms so that schedules are predictable and children know what is expected of them. The lessons observed were described as typical and both target teachers emphasized the importance of routine in their primary classrooms.

## **Case Study – Bethune School**

### Introduction

Bethune School is an inner-city school with a student enrollment of 467 from grades Pre K-5. The school is located in a large metropolitan area in the northwest portion of Kentucky. It was among seven elementary schools in its district that was awarded the REA grant. All of these schools were eligible based on their Title I School Improvement status and their free-and reduced-lunch rate. At this school, approximately 84% of the students qualify for free- and reduced-lunch. Forty-four percent of the students are white and 52% are African American. Over 128,000 adults in this schools' county do not have high school diplomas or GED's. The Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey reports that 27% of the adult population in this county function at the lowest levels of literacy and are often employed only part time.

The District Reading Specialist and other district staff accessed research on the selected reading model based on input from the local university, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE), and the Developmental Studies Center (Child Development Project). The selected model is a combination of the Four-Block Literacy Model developed by Cunningham (1991, 1996) and the literacy component of the Child Development Project from the Developmental Studies Center. The model, called the "Five-Block Model", contains the components of guided reading, self-selected reading, word work, writing, and community reading and conversation. Each block requires a 30-minute commitment. Information from the grant application says that the model was chosen because the district has a board policy to support a balanced approach in reading instruction, and professional development has already been available for separate components of the model.

### Student Outcomes

The Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) is the statewide assessment used to measure all schools' progress in educating children. Schools are judged on two years of test scores. If schools improve, they earn cash rewards. If they decline, they receive state assistance, which can include an examination of the school by a state audit team. Beginning with the 2001 and 2002 scores, schools also will be judged on progress toward a state goal; reading a score of 100 out of 140 on the test by 2014. Each school receives a growth chart plotting how much progress it must make every two years to hit 100.

In the 1999-2000 cycle, Bethune School scored 51.7; in 2000-2001 it scored 55.8. The goal for the 2001-2002 cycle is 57.5 which means Bethune

must gain 3.4 points per year to reach the state goal of 100 by 2014. The average score among all elementary schools in the state was 70.9 for 2000-2001. Compared to the top ten performing elementary schools (score range 97.6 – 106.9) and the ten lowest performing elementary schools (score range 40 – 49.2), it appears that Bethune is performing well below the top performing schools and just above the lowest performing schools.

For the purposes of extensive study, the lowest 20% of students in this school were assessed on post assessments of early literacy (i.e. Yopp-Singer Phonemic Awareness, Flynt & Cooter Informal Reading Inventory). Data are available on four students. Two were third grade and two were fifth grade. The third graders, one male, scored 14 out of 22 correct and, one female scored 18 out of 22 correct on the Yopp-Singer Phonemic Awareness assessment at the end of the first year of the model implementation for intervention. The fifth graders, both males, scored 13 out of 22 each on the same assessment. This indicates that the younger students may have benefited more from the intervention model for literacy instruction. On the Flynt-Cooter, the results are shown in Table 1 below:

#### **Post Collection of Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory Scores**

	<u><b>Independent</b></u>	<u><b>Instructional</b></u>	<u><b>Frustr.</b></u>
Student 1 (Gr. 3, male)	Primer	Primer	Level 1
Student 2 (Gr. 3, female)	Primer	Level 1	Level 2
Student 3 (Gr. 5, male)	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2
Student 4 (Gr. 5, male)	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2

The data indicate that none of the students tested at the end of the year were on grade level. But the younger female appears to making more progress at the end of the first year of intervention. In fact, she scored at the same instructional level as the fifth graders. There was very little reading growth overall for all of the students tested during the end of the spring semester.

In addition, this school was asked to administer a post assessment of the Early Reading Attitude Survey to students in grades K-3. The average percentile K-3 data for the Early Reading Attitude are provided in Table 2 below:

**The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results 2000-2001**  
**Bethune Elementary School Percentiles**

**Post-Collection**

<b>Grade</b>	<b># Ss</b>	<b>Recreational</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Avg. Totals</b>
1	69	51.1	61.4	56.2
2	57	57	75.4	66.2
3	28	60	66.2	63.1

These results indicate that second graders demonstrate a more positive attitude toward reading (66.2%) overall than the first (56.2%) and third graders (63.1). Related to this, the second graders scored higher on academic reading attitude (75.4%) than the first (61.4%) and third graders (66.2). But, critical to this observation is the fact that they exhibit a larger gap between their attitudes about recreational reading and academic reading. First graders scored the lowest in every category for reading attitude while the third graders averaged a 63.1% for the totals in reading attitude. All of the grades scored above the 50% range in every category which means they scored better than 50% of other youngsters who have taken this test at their age and grade levels.

The Reader Self Perception Scale was developed in response to calls in the professional literature for self-evaluation instruments that measure the way readers appraise themselves. Children who believe they are good readers probably enjoy a rich history of reader engagement and exhibit a strong likelihood of continued positive interactions with text. By contrast, children who perceive themselves as poor readers probably have not experienced much in the way of reading success. They are not likely to perceive reading as a source of gratification. The scale examines four areas of self-perception: Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback and Physiological States.

The Table below summarizes the results of this assessment for Bethune schools' 112 fourth and fifth grade students who completed the scale.



### Reader Self-Perception Scale

Score Guide:	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
	44+	26+	38+	37+
	Average 39	21	33	32
	Low 34	16	27	25
	39 (range 21-45)	19.7 (range 10-30)	34.7 (range 18-45)	29.9 (range 14-45)

The results of the scale being administered to intermediate students indicate students scoring average to low on all the measures. The two average categories (e.g. Progress, Social Feedback) indicate that students are probably receiving adequate levels of communication from the teacher about their reading progress. However, to elevate scores, the teachers may choose to modify their current classroom oral reading practices, revise their grouping techniques, pay closer attention to the reading materials they assign, become more sensitive to indirect signals they send to children regarding their reading performance and strive to make the children more physically and mentally comfortable during the act of reading. The two categories where the students scored lowest (e.g. Observational Comparison, Physiological State) indicate that an examination by the teachers of student confidence about reading silently or orally is warranted and a monitoring of students' indicators of discomfort would be helpful.

#### The Nature of Literacy Instruction

Teachers were observed two times each during the academic year from one hour and 20 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes at a time. Students were typically grouped in small, mixed level groups with read aloud activities. The teachers also provided whole class direct instruction, guided oral reading with discussion and partner reading. The teachers were noted to use the standard IRE style of questioning (e.g. inquire, respond, and evaluate). The teachers stated that the purpose of their instruction was guided practice, teaching strategies for comprehension, teaching decoding strategies and comprehension of a particular text. The salient features that were observed to promote learning were the teacher's ability to engage, motivate, and scaffold students. In addition, activities that involved talk that is connected to real life with appropriate materials, organization of time, and appropriate flexible grouping contributed to the engagement of students, also. For example, one teacher consistently used high level thinking questions to probe students' ability to make inferences and evaluations about a read aloud story. Later, in partner groups, the students took turns to read a different story to each other (after reading it silently to themselves) and the teacher continued the process of facilitating students comprehension by asking questions like: "How do you feel about what Julian's

father did in the story?" "Why do you think he did those things?" "Was it fair what he did?" "Why do you think so?"

There were few salient features that prohibited learning but field observers noted that lack of variety of materials and some clutter among the teachers was not helpful in engaging students in the learning process. All of the teachers indicated that their instruction was very much like the model for which they had received professional development preparation and that they engaged in these activities frequently. One teacher said that she used the activities daily while the three other teachers commented that the activities were used from 2-4 times a week. Additional instructional activities that teachers reported using but were not observed included independent book reports and other small group reading/discussion focus.

### Parental Involvement

According to the grant application, parents were provided the opportunity to receive professional development to enable them to be their child's first and foremost teacher. Transportation to the school for this preparation was provided in the form of bus tokens or taxi vouchers to attend the sessions most convenient for them. Parents were also transported by cab twice a week to the school to interact with their children using the Five-Block Model. They were further afforded the opportunity to attend adult education classes, early childhood education for parents of children four years and younger, and a welfare-to-work program that was designed to build job skills and to support the successful transition of parents into jobs that provide adequate income and sufficient medical benefits for their families. These services were provided through other funded programs such as Even Start.

Parents in the Bethune Elementary School, also, were asked to complete a fifteen item post survey regarding literacy practices at home. Parents were to respond to items on a 4-point scale where 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree. Only twelve surveys were returned; the researcher felt there were too few representations to provide an effective analysis of families.

### Congruence with Literacy Standards

The International Reading Association standards list the following (2000):

- Excellent reading teachers
- understand reading and writing development and believe all children can learn to read and write
- assess children's individual progress and relate reading instruction to children's previous experiences
- know a variety of ways to teach reading, where to use each method, and how to combine the methods into an effective instructional program

- offer a variety of materials and texts for children to read
- use flexible grouping strategies to tailor instruction to individual students
- are good reading "coaches"

The National Reading Panel Report (NRP) advocates that early reading instruction should provide a balance of phonics, fluency, comprehension, and strategy instruction.

Based on the classroom observations, the teachers of Bethune Elementary School are using a balance of skills with the Five-Block model of literacy intervention. But the teachers' knowledge and use of the model varied. Two of the four teachers reported that their instruction matched the model very closely while one other teacher reported very little and the last teacher reported that her instruction matched the model somewhat. In terms of the IRA standards, it was unclear whether teachers had knowledge of students' development. Most classrooms used a variety of materials but the outstanding features included teacher affective qualities like ability to engage and motivate students. The teachers appeared to believe and act in ways that they communicated to students that the students could read materials and think critically. In this regard, they were good "coaches" for the students.

### **Case Study - Menands School**

## Introduction

Menands School is located in a small semi-rural school district in west central Kentucky. This school district is composed of two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Menands School has an enrollment of 450 students, grades Kindergarten through 5. According to the school principal, this enrollment is comprised of 225 males and 225 females. Students attending this school are primarily white (97.5%); the enrollment also consists of .7% African American, .7% Hispanic, .3% Asian American, and .8% Other students. Approximately 50% of the enrolled students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Principal and teacher interviews, as well as teacher and project director surveys indicate that this school selected NRSI Carbo Reading Styles as their reading model for the Reading Excellence Act local improvement grant. A committee who reviewed several reading programs chose this model. Needs assessment data as well as goals included in the school's Consolidated Plan matched the Carbo Reading Styles model. This program is used as a supplement to the school's ongoing literacy program. Teachers were paid a stipend to attend training for the program. In addition, the school pays for substitute teachers so those teachers have release time to record books on tape, an integral part of the Carbo program. Substitutes also cover for teachers so that they may have in-school planning time. Teachers were given an allowance to spend on books, tape recorders, headsets, and tapes. The principal indicates that one of the biggest challenges in implementing the program has been money for substitutes and having substitutes available as needed.

## Student Outcomes

This section will contain information regarding statewide assessment data, results from individually administered reading assessments on target children, and results from attitude assessments administered school wide.

According to statewide assessment data, the average score among students at Menands School for the 2000-2001 school year was 74.9. The state goal is that by the year 2014, all students will score at least 100 on the statewide assessment. Based on last year's score, Menands School will have to increase their index score by 1.9 points per year in order to reach the state goal. Interestingly, scores are reviewed on a two-year cycle. Menands School's 2000-2002 goal was 73.5. The school has surpassed that goal in the first half of the biennium, raising its score from 70.4 in the 1999-2000 school year. Statewide assessments are administered in April each year. Based on the April 2001 results, 46 of the 58 Reading Excellence-funded schools in Kentucky raised their statewide assessment scores from the previous year, although many did not exceed their biennial goal, as did Menands School. According to these statewide assessments, Menands School appears to be making "average" progress toward the statewide achievement goal. To put Menands School's

progress in perspective, one might examine the performance of students in the top ten performing elementary schools (score range 97.6 - 106.9) and the ten lowest performing elementary schools (score range 40 - 49.2). The average score among elementary schools in the state was 70.9.

As part of our intensive study design, individual reading assessments were administered to the lowest achieving 20% of students in each target classroom within a school. Pre- and post-assessment data are available on only five students from this school. Four of these students were enrolled in Grade 1 and one was enrolled in Grade 3. All students were administered the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory; alternate forms were used at the two assessment points. Results of these assessments are mixed. According to this assessment, two first grade students improved their scores, one remained the same, and one student's scores decreased. These scores are detailed in the table below.

**Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory  
First Grade Students at Menands Elementary**

**Pre-Collection**

**Post-Collection**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Indep.</b>	<b>Inst.</b>	<b>Frust</b>	<b>Indep.</b>	<b>Inst.</b>	<b>Frust.</b>
1	----	P Primer	Primer	P Primer	Primer	Level 1
2	----	P Primer	P Primer	P Primer	P Primer	Primer
3	Primer	----	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4	----	Primer	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2

The single 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student on whom there is pre- and post-assessment data also demonstrated declining scores. On the first assessment, this student's reading levels were: independent - level 3, Instructional - level 4, frustrational - level 5. At the end of the year assessment, his performance was lower: independent - Primer, instructional - level 2, frustrational - level 3. Taken together, the individual assessment data on these five children indicate that by the end of the school year, one was reading above grade level, one was reading on grade level, and three were reading below grade level. Of course, one must remember that this is a single assessment, and that an individual student's performance on any given day can be influenced by multiple factors.

REA intensive study schools were asked to administer the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to students in grades K-3 and The Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995) to students in grades 4 and 5, both on a pre and post basis. Menands School did not administer The Reader Self-Perception Scale, so attitudinal data are available only for students in grades K-3. The average percentile K-3 data for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey are summarized in the table below.

**The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results (2000-2001)**

## Menands School

### Pre-Collection

### Post-Collection

Grade	#Ss	Rec.	Aca.	Range	#Ss	Rec.	Aca.	Range
K					16	35.56	36.68	59-80
1	59	29.72	29.94	20-80	93	31.91	33.16	40-80
2	64	31.53	30.79	20-80	65	31.55	30.83	36-80
3					77	30.94	29.16	37-80

Rec. = Recreational Reading Scale

Aca. = Academic Reading Scale

The average full scale percentile score for students in Kindergarten was 67.25. For first graders, the average full scale pre score was 59.67, while the average post score was 65.4. For second grade students, the average full scale pre score was 62.34 and the average post-score was 62.38. Third grade students, having taken the survey only at the end of the school year, had an average full scale score of 60.11. Like students in McKenna and Kear's norming group, attitudinal scores for these students decreased with age, particularly when one examines the end of year survey data. Also interesting to note is that for first grade students, the average percentile score increased over 5 points between pre- and post testing. Of course, more students completed the end of year survey as well. Another interesting trend in these data is that the academic scale scores are higher than the recreational scale scores for Kindergarten and first grade students. These trends were noted for students in most of the intensive study schools.

### The Nature of Literacy Instruction

Classroom observations, lasting between one hour fifteen minutes and one hour forty-five minutes, revealed that many different activities took place within the literacy block at Menands School. Instruction was primarily teacher directed, and often took place in small ability groups. While a teacher met with a group for instruction, other students were engaged in independent work including computers, reading workbook pages, writing assignments, or listening to books on tape. Most of the lessons observed had a specific skill focus. Students read orally within group, and were told to use skills such as dictionaries, phonic elements, rhyming words, etc. Students also engaged in Sustained Silent Reading, and the teachers often read aloud to the students. Based on observational protocols and teacher post-observational interviews, the purpose of lessons was to promote reading comprehension, reading fluency, and vocabulary skill development. The teachers were often noted to ask higher order questions during and after students' reading. Given the nature of the Carbo Reading Program, there were some aspects present in these classrooms that might not otherwise be seen. For example, students were allowed (perhaps encouraged)

to use colored overlays as they read, either in groups or independently, to help them focus on particular print aspects of the text. Also, students were allowed to wear earplugs (again working independently or in groups) to eliminate distracting sounds and help them focus.

There were several aspects of instruction that were seen to promote learning. The teachers were engaging and motivating, and had good rapport with the students. They were good managers of time and materials. The grouping formats and rotations were seen as successful, although students working independently were often observed to be off task. Students were given choice in their activities. Instructional activities were seen to promote meaning and phonics, and they often involved authentic literacy practices. The classroom settings, however, were found to fall short of an enhancing print environment. There were few "literacy related" posters or charts, although the classrooms did have small classroom libraries. Students had access to the school library on a regular basis as well. The teachers noted that students "read - read - read" many times throughout the day, since they participate in DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) as well as Accelerated Reader.

### Parental Involvement

According to the school principal and teachers, parental involvement in children's literacy takes many forms. It is interesting to note that a parent was a member of the committee that selected the Carbo Reading Styles model for this school. With this model there are pre-designed Read At Home Folders (Home Sides), homework activities that involve the parents. The school also participates in Read Across America, National Literacy Day, and held a family literacy night in the fall. Many of the teachers who responded to the survey indicated that family involvement had always been a priority at the school. Some said that parents who have visited their classrooms have shown a marked interest in the new learning centers, tape recorders and headphones, etc. A few teachers noted that they sent newsletters home to parents containing suggestions for at-home literacy activities. One teacher, however, suggested that a newsletter explaining the new program should have been sent to parents at the beginning of the year.

Parental surveys indicate that generally, parents held positive attitudes about the literacy program their children were experiencing at school. Pre- and post-parental surveys were completed by 143 and 116 parents, respectively. On 14 of the 15 survey items, the average parental ratings were higher at the post-administration. In fact, significant differences ( $p < .001$ ) were found on six items. Those items on which significant differences were found are listed below, along with the average rating for pre- and post-administration. Parents were to respond to items on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree). All of these significant differences favor a more positive response from parents at post-data collection.

Survey Item	Pre Mean	Post Mean
1. My child's teacher communicates with me regularly.	1.76	1.51
2. My child appears to be making progress in reading.	1.53	1.32
3. My child appears to like reading	1.61	1.47
4. The "new" reading program was explained clearly to me.	2.15	1.90
5. I read with my child at home.	1.50	1.40
6. I'm aware of the types of things my child likes to read about.	1.58	1.41

Two survey items received average parental ratings that fell in the 2 – 3 range: "I take my child to the library", and "My child prefers to read rather than watch TV". It's obvious that a number of parents disagreed with these statements.

#### Link to Literacy Standards

When examining Menands School data in light of the IRA/NCTE Standards of the English Language Arts (1996), it appears that some of the standards are at least partially addressed. Observational and teacher interview data, as well as parental survey information indicate that students are being given the opportunity to read a wide variety of materials. Students read from a basal for group work, but also have sustained silent reading time and are read to daily by the teachers. Classroom observations also indicate that instruction guides students in employing a wide range of strategies to recognize words and comprehend text. It is also apparent that students use a variety of resources as they progress through the school day. Students were observed to use computers, tape recorders and headphones, as well as reference materials. At this point, however, it does not appear that these resources are being used to create or communicate knowledge.

## **Part 4: Parental/Family Involvement**

A critical component of the Reading Excellence Act is increasing family involvement in children's literacy development. Information regarding the extent to which local incentive grants are meeting this component was gathered from several sources: teacher participant surveys; and teacher interviews, principal interviews, and parental surveys from intensive study sites. These data sources indicate that many different activities are taking place in REA schools. Those activities commonly mentioned include the following: Family literacy nights, at-



home reading programs, home-school notebooks, home visits, monthly family literacy workshops, demonstrations of program for parents, family support groups, and various take home materials. Some programs also collaborate with the Family Resource Center, Adult Learning Services, Even Start, and community organizations to provide parenting classes, parenting handbooks, GED classes, and media services. A few schools also have held week long summer programs. Parent surveys indicate generally that parents are informed of the literacy programs operating in their children's schools, and that they have received information regarding ways in which they can help their children at home.

The Parental Survey included fifteen Likert-type items that parents rated on a 4-point scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree. Factor analysis on the Parental Survey indicated that items loaded on three factors: communication between school and home, actual parental involvement with children, and child behaviors. All three factors had high reliability, alpha levels ranging from .77 to .88. Analysis of Variance and t-tests indicated statistically significant differences by grade levels on all three factors. That is, parental responses on this survey indicated higher ratings in the lower than higher grades. On the Communication factor, parental responses for grades significantly more positive for grades K - 3 than grades 4 - 5, and significantly more positive for grade 4 than grade 5. The Communication factor included the following items:

- 1) My child's teacher communicates with me regularly.
- 2) I'm aware of the type of reading instruction my child receives.
- 3) I'm pleased with the type of reading instruction my child receives.
- 4) My child's teacher suggests reading activities to complete at home
- 5) My child appears to be making progress in reading.
- 8) The "new" reading program was explained clearly to me

On the Parental Involvement factor, parental responses for grades K - 1 were significantly more positive than grades 3 - 5, and responses for grade 2 were significantly more positive than those for grade 5. The Parental Involvement factor included the following items:

- 9) I would like to take a more significant role in my child's literacy development.
- 10) I take my child to the library regularly.
- 11) I read with my child at home.
- 12) My child enjoys reading with me.
- 13) I'm aware of the types of things my child likes to read.

Similarly, on the Child Behavior factor, parental responses for grades K - 2 were significantly more positive than those for grade 4. The Child Behavior factor included the following items:

- 6) My child appears to like reading.
- 7) My child appears to like reading class in school.
- 14) My child prefers to read rather than watch TV.
- 15) I've observed my child reading with siblings or other children in the community.

Across all surveys, the two items rated lowest by parents were #10 (I take my child to the library regularly), and item #14 (My child prefers to read rather than watch TV). Both scored, on the average, between 2 (Agree) and 3 (Disagree) on the scale. This, of course, means that some parents rated these items in the 4 (Strongly Disagree) category.

## **Part 5: Support for Instruction and Perceived Improvements**

Information addressing this section of the report is derived from data from several sources: principal interviews, teacher interviews, and teacher participant surveys. Viewing these sources reveals that there are numerous ways in which teachers were supported in implementing the new reading models adopted by REA-funded schools.

Teacher participants were specifically asked what changes they anticipated in teacher and school practices as a result of the chosen model. The responses to this question on the participant survey were quite varied. Some of the responses mentioned most frequently included the following:

- better use of reading and writing strategies
- greater use teacher modeling for demonstrating strategies with students
- more collaboration among teachers
- higher expectations for student performance
- more consistency across classes and grades
- more writing than reading taught
- longer language arts classes
- more consistent language used during instruction
- use of standards-based practices
- increased test scores
- use of reading strategies improving student performance across the curriculum
- smaller class sizes
- more individualized instruction

Several of the reading models adopted by REA-funded schools have built in staff development activities provided by consultants associated with the model. Staff development opportunities was a common theme that occurred in teacher interviews, principal interviews, and teacher participant surveys. The amount of staff development varied according to model, but most was perceived by teachers and principals to be effective in helping teachers make changes in their practice. Time for staff development and planning was a related aspect mentioned by many. Often teachers are asked (or required) to make significant changes in their classrooms but are given little or no time during the school day to comply with these requests. Several principals and teachers mentioned that provisions were made to allow teachers to plan, create materials, etc. during the school day in order to better implement the new model adopted through the REA funding. Principals talked of hiring substitute teachers so that regular classroom teachers might attend training and plan together during the school day. Finding

both the funding and the required number of quality substitutes were mentioned as problems in providing this support.

Another aspect related to support and perceived changes is the fact that many teachers mentioned having the opportunity to engage in research and visit other schools implementing models before a given model was chosen for their school. Teacher participants found it particularly helpful to see a program in action before making a decision whether a given model would be appropriate in the context of a particular school.

A final question on the teacher participant survey asked teachers to list any modifications they had made since beginning the REA-funded project. Responses again varied by model adopted, and many were model specific. Some of the modifications more global in nature included the following:

- addition of a daily writing block
- modifying the literacy model's writing recommendations to fit the Kentucky writing portfolio
- reading aloud to students
- allowing students (particularly advanced readers) to progress at their own pace
- more time spent answering questions

Additionally, during this first implementation year many teacher respondents indicated that they still use the basal (even if their model calls for using other types of materials) a significant portion of the time as they get used to the new program. Some mentioned that the basal gets used about 75% of the time in their classrooms during the transition to other materials and practices.

## Summary

Much data is available to indicate that under the local incentive grants, Reading Excellence Act-funded schools are changing the nature of literacy instruction and having a positive impact on student learning.

### **Application and Awards Process**

- Local Incentive Grants were awarded to 29 school districts and encompassed 58 schools. Fourteen different literacy models are being implemented in these funded schools.
- In the majority, literacy models were chosen collaboratively by administrators, members of site-based councils, and teachers. Some respondents to the teacher participant surveys indicated that they had no choice in the model selected for implementation in their schools. Other respondents to this survey indicated that they researched models and visited schools implementing given models before making a choice.
- Those who submitted proposals most often heard about the opportunity from the Kentucky Department of Education.
- Assistance in preparing proposals for the Local Incentive Grants was both available and useful from many sources: KDE personnel, workshops, and websites; consultants from Regional Service Centers; KET programming; consultants from specific reading programs; and local central office personnel.

Important to the contexts in which local incentive grants operate, teachers cited parental involvement/family issues as the most significant factor in students' success learning to read. Interestingly, many teachers cited classroom instruction as an influential factor in students' success but not students' failure in learning to read proficiently.

### **Student Outcomes**

Data addressing student outcomes included results of several assessments: statewide assessments (CATS), reading attitude surveys administered to students in intensive study sites, and individual assessments administered to students in intensive study sites.

### Statewide Assessments

- CATS scores, when examined by region and ERIG-funded schools, indicate that student performance improved from 1999-2000 baseline to the 2000-2001 testing cycle in 46 of the 58 REA-funded schools as compared to improvements in 56/72 ERIG-funded schools.
- Twenty-two REA-funded schools exceeded their biennial goal in the first half of the biennium, and eleven schools scored above the state average of 70.9 for the 2000-2001 school year.
- REA-funded schools must make greater gains per year, by region, than ERIG-funded schools. In seven of eight educational service regions, however, baseline scores for ERIG-funded schools surpassed those of REA-funded schools.
- Seven literacy models were chosen by **both** REA-funded and ERIG-funded schools. Examining scores for both literacy initiatives by literacy model indicated that for four of the seven models, REA-funded schools had larger gains from the 1999-2000 baseline to the 2000-2001 testing cycle.

### Individualized Reading Assessments

The lowest 20% of students in terms of reading achievement in each target teacher's classroom within intensive study sites were administered the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory to gauge individual performance at two points during the school year.

- A total of 37 students were assessed using the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory, 28 of who were assessed twice, using alternate forms.
- Sixty-one percent of the students increased their scores from pre-testing to post-testing.
- Roughly half (51%) of these individually assessed struggling readers were reading on or above grade level at the end of the school year according to the Flynt-Cooter.

### Students' Reading Attitudes and Self-Perceptions

Students at intensive study sites were to complete either the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (K - 3rd) or the Reader Self-Perception Scale (4th - 5th) at the beginning and ending of the school year. These assessments were used to determine students' beliefs about themselves as readers, as well as their opinions regarding both recreational and school-related reading tasks.

- Average Full Scale scores on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey indicate that students completing these surveys held significantly lower attitudes about reading than did their age level peers who participated in the norming of the survey.

- In most instances, average percentile scores for academic reading exceeded those for recreational reading on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.
- Students' scores on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey generally decreased with age, indicating that younger students held more positive attitudes about reading.
- Students generally scored in the "average" category in all sections of the Reader Self-Perception Scale.
- The lowest scoring for all schools on the Reader Self-Perception Scale fell in the "Observational Comparisons" category. Survey items in this category require students to compare their reading abilities, attitudes, and perceptions to those of their classmates.

### **The Nature of Literacy Instruction**

Under Local Incentive Grants, fourteen different literacy models were in their first year of implementation in 58 different schools. Sample case studies from intensive study sites were included to provide a rich description of how instruction in being implemented in different contexts. Teacher responses regarding instructional implementation included the following commonalities:

- focus on literature-based instruction
- emphasis on phonics, particularly with younger children
- use of interactive writing
- use of computer programming
- strategy modeling
- direct instruction
- links to the Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies

### **Parental/Family Involvement**

Data addressing this issue were available from teacher and principal interviews, teacher participant surveys, and parental surveys sent to parents in intensive study sites. An examination of these data indicated that numerous activities are being implemented to further involve parents in the literacy development of their children. Some parental/family involvement activities frequently mentioned include the following:

- family literacy nights
- at-home reading programs (parent and child read together)
- home-school notebooks (aimed at communication)
- home visits
- periodic family literacy workshops
- strategy demonstrations for parents
- family support groups
- take-home materials for literacy activities

It was noted that some of these activities take place in collaboration with the Family Resource Center, Adult Learning Services, Even Start, and various community agencies.

Parental survey responses indicated that, generally, parents felt involved in their children's literacy development. Items on this survey were related to three factors: communication between school and home, parental involvement, and child behaviors.

- Parents of younger children made higher ratings on the communication items, indicating that they felt more positive about communication from school than did parents of older children.
- Parents of younger children made higher ratings on the parental involvement items indicating that they were more involved with their children's literacy development than were parents of older children.
- Parents of younger children made higher ratings on the child behavior items, indicating that the younger children were observed to be involved in more literacy behaviors at home and held more positive attitudes toward reading, than did parents of older children.
- Across all surveys, the two items garnering the least agreement were: "I take my child to the library regularly", and "My child would rather read than watch TV".

### **Support for Instruction and Perceived Improvements**

Both teachers and principals indicated that many efforts have been made to support them in negotiating changes required by the literacy models adopted under the REA Local Incentive Grants. Much of this support came in the forms of staff development and training, and release time within the school day to attend workshops or plan.

Teachers listed many changes and benefits to the new programs adopted. Some of those most commonly mentioned were:

- better use of standards-based reading and writing strategies
- greater use of modeling to demonstrate strategies
- greater collaboration among teachers for planning and support, and to insure consistency of instructional language and consistency in practices across grade levels and subjects



- higher expectations for student performance
- increased test scores

## Recommendations

The data presented and discussed in this report were gathered from the first implementation year of the REA local incentive grants. During the first implementation year of any new project, change occurs slowly and there are always problem areas that need to be addressed. It is with these thoughts in mind that the following recommendations are made.

- **Work on improving students' attitudes toward reading.** In many cases, students expressed less than positive attitudes about reading, and recreational reading scores were often lower than academic reading scores on student attitude surveys. While improving students' reading ability should certainly be a goal in all schools, programs also need to encourage students to **want** to read. Reading aloud quality children's literature to students, allowing students recreational reading time with self-selected materials in school, and facilitating at-home reading programs may help improve students' attitudes towards reading.
- **Involve parents of children at all grade levels in children's literacy development.** Data indicated that many activities were taking place in order to involve parents in the literacy development of their children. However, parental surveys indicated that parents of the younger children are more involved and feel there is better communication from school than do parents of older children. Children, particularly struggling readers who are targeted by the Reading Excellence Act, need home support beyond the primary years if they are to become proficient readers. Parents need concrete suggestions of at-home activities that will promote literacy growth and coordinate with the in-school literacy program.
- **Give additional instruction to the lowest performing students.** Data from individual assessments administered in intensive study sites indicate that only half of the targeted students were reading on or above grade level by the end of the school year. Unfortunately, some targeted students' scores declined over the course of the year. Additional instruction and more time to read connected text should be priorities for these students.
- **Continue to plan and deliver literacy instruction that is standards-based.**